

VZCZCXRO2738  
RR RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHBC #0116/01 3491508  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 151508Z DEC 07  
FM BASRAH  
TO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0236  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0653  
RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC  
INFO RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 0687

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000116

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: SAYID AL-SHUHADA LEADER DENIES IRANIAN TETHERS

REF: BASRAH 104

BASRAH 00000116 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Louis L. Bono, Director, Basrah Regional Embassy  
Office, Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (d)

11. (C/REL AUS/CAN/UK) SUMMARY: Sayid al-Shuhada (SAS) Secretary General Sayid Dagher al-Musawi visited the Regional Embassy Office (REO) on December 13, 2007. SAS is believed to be an Iranian front organization, but Dagher denied he is controlled by Iranians. Rather, he claimed SAS is a legitimate political party. He wants to maintain close ties with the U.S. and seeks U.S. support to terminate UN Security Council resolutions after 2008 and to encourage the Gulf States to play a positive role in Iraq. End summary.

#### COMMITMENT TO JEFFERSONIAN PRINCIPLES

12. (C/REL AUS/CAN/UK) Sayid Dagher, who is also SAS' sole Counsel of Representatives (CoR) member, was accompanied by his brother Deputy Secretary General Sayid Hilal al-Musawi; Political Director and Provincial Council Member Qasim al-Fayad; and Drs. Nasser Abd al-Sajad and Hussien Khalif, both university professors. Dagher began by thanking the USG for eliminating the "dictatorial regime" and the American families who lost their sons and daughters. Dagher said SAS (Lord of the Martyrs) was born in 1991 to fight the regime but disarmed after the regime was toppled. It is now a political organization committed to: (1) democratic political discourse, (2) supremacy of the people, (3) harmony between the sects, (4) a government selected by the majority that respects minority rights, (5) protection of women's rights, and (6) good relations with bordering states. He stressed that SAS is a "moderate movement" and boasted that 12 university professors have joined, citing Nasser and Hussien as proof. Dagher added that SAS members comprise of several sects including Sunni, Baptist (followers of John the Baptist), and Christians.

#### NO MORE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

13. (C/REL AUS/CAN/UK) SAS seeks close ties with the United States to promote stability and prosperity, but Dagher said that President George H.W. Bush abandoned the people of Basrah during the 1991 uprising. He called for an end to UNSC resolutions after 2008 to "fully establish Iraqi sovereignty" and the withdrawal of U.S. forces after the ISF have been reconstituted: the U.S. should stay "one more year but no longer." He was initially unprepared to offer a position on the permanent stationing of U.S. forces but later said he was not opposed

providing there was an agreement with the GoI.

I JUST LIKE TO VACATION IN IRAN

14. (C/REL AUS/CAN/UK) Dagher was critical of foreign intervention: "Iraq used to threaten other countries, now we pay the price," but he directed his wrath toward the Gulf States. He said the Gulf States do not respect the GoI and support Sunni insurgents. Dagher vehemently denied that SAS is an Iranian front organization. He said, "I know there are rumors that I am a general in the Quds Force" and challenged anyone to come forward with proof. He said that during the uprising, Iran was the only neighbor to provide support for "refugees and their families." He pointed out the close cultural ties between Iran and Iraq, citing the two holy cities of Qom and Najaf. He said Shiism, like Catholicism, transcends national boundaries. Nonetheless, he declared "I take my family to Iran during every CoR recess."

WHAT THE US CAN DO FOR US

15. (C/REL AUS/CAN/UK) Sayid Hilal also rejected the notion of Iranian fealty. He said that he fought as a private in the Iraqi Special Forces against Iran and would fight again for Iraq. He also expressed gratitude for ridding Iraq of the dictator and said the USG can "preserve this good act" by (1) eliminating terror, (2) promoting reconstruction and growth, (3) not renewing the UNSCR after 2008, (4) environmental protection, (5) encouraging the Gulf States to play a positive role, and (6) early elections based on an open list. Referring to our successful reconstruction efforts in Germany, Japan, and Korea, Hilal encouraged the U.S. to stay "until the end."

COMMENT

16. (C/REL AUS/CAN/UK) Dagher and Hilal seemed sincere in their desire to improve relations with the U.S., but disingenuous on their independence from the IRGC. Their enmity toward the Gulf States, while understandable, starkly contrasts with their

BASRAH 00000116 002.2 OF 002

benign view of Iran. As in the previous meeting (reftel), they sought to connect by emphasizing their commitment to issues such as women's rights, pollution, and religious freedom. Hilal even phoned our interpreter after the meeting to gauge our reaction and stated his interest in visiting the U.S. We will continue to meet with SAS officials and encourage them to play an active role in promoting stability in Basrah and harmony between the factions.

BONO